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# HOUSING AND RECREATION

BY ROBERT MOSES

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# HOUSING AND RECREATION

BY ROBERT MOSES  
COMMISSIONER OF PARKS

NOVEMBER 22, 1958

NEW YORK, N. Y.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE HOUSING AMENDMENT OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1st, 1959

*Section 1:* Subject to the provisions of this article, the legislature may provide in such manner, by such means and upon such terms and conditions as it may prescribe for low rent housing for persons of low income as defined by law, or for the clearance, replanning, reconstruction and rehabilitation of sub-standard and unsanitary areas, or for both such purposes, and for recreational and other facilities incidental or appurtenant thereto.

*Section 6:* No loan, or subsidy shall be made by the State to aid any project unless such project is in conformity with a plan or undertaking for the clearance, replanning and reconstruction or rehabilitation of a sub-standard and unsanitary area or areas and for recreational and other facilities incidental or appurtenant thereto.

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# HOUSING AND RECREATION

As Commissioner of Parks of this city, as head of other government agencies, and as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, my interest in low-rent housing in New York City requires no explanation. There is no such thing as a sound recreation policy for this city which is not based upon close coordination with slum clearance, low rent housing, and indeed, housing or rehousing of every kind. Practically all major public improvements are vitally affected by the housing program. The notion that housing experts can function in a vacuum is absurd. It is not too much to say that the new housing program is the major physical problem of the city, and that it will engage a considerable part of the energies of all of its officials, not to speak of the attention which the Governor and legislative leaders will give it in Albany when the next legislature convenes.

The housing amendment to the State Constitution, adopted two weeks ago by the people, definitely states in the first section that its major purpose is low-rent housing, slum clearance, and recreational and other facilities incidental thereto, and the power of eminent domain is not only granted for these purposes, but is extended so that excess property may be taken which may be used

for other public purposes, or be sold or leased with restrictions, to preserve and protect the housing improvements.

The adoption of this amendment must be followed by immediate action on a definite program to be embodied in the statute which will make the amendment effective and replace the present housing laws. The amendment is neither so deep as a well nor so wide as a church door. It was originally introduced by Councilman Baldwin, as drafted by a committee appointed by Mayor LaGuardia headed by former Corporation Counsel Windels. I was a member of this committee and no one could have been more astonished than I was at what happened to our brain child. Beginning with a broad grant of powers couched in the fewest possible words, the amendment was blown up in the convention into a verbose, turgid dissertation half as long as the original Constitution of the United States, and composed largely of purely statutory matter.

It is futile to debate at this late date whether the complexity of the problem, the staggering sums and the novel economic theories involved, contribute to this flood of words or whether we should blame it on delegates who, in the words of the French

Wit, were too busy to write a short constitution. The fact is that this is the best that we could get, and those who felt strongly that something had to be done by the State and its municipalities to supplement federal work on this problem, are glad that the people accepted the amendment at the polls.

So far as the substance of the amendment is concerned, it is a very tentative approach to the great problem. The State provides loans only up to a total of \$300,000,000, without a further referendum, and these loans must be paid within fifty years and must be fully secured, and no greater amount of debt can be authorized before January 1, 1942. State subsidies may not aggregate more than \$1,000,000 in any one year, and at no time may more than \$5,000,000 be paid in the form of subsidies in any one year without a further referendum. State grants may be for a maximum of sixty years. Cities may incur debts up to 2% of their average assessed real estate valuation, but this debt must be serviced by taxes other than ad valorem taxes on real estate. Both subsidies and loans may not be made for more than sixty years. Tax exemption may be granted for not more than sixty years. No loan or subsidy may be made by the State except for genuine slum clearance, replanning, reconstruction or rehabilitation of sub-standard and unsanitary areas and for recreational and other facilities incidental thereto. Occupancy is restricted to persons of low income with a preference

to those who live or shall have lived in the areas affected. It is implied in the amendment that the same rules will be applied to municipal loans and grants. The State loans and grants may be made to private limited dividend corporations as well as municipalities, and private owners of existing multiple dwellings may receive loans but not grants from the municipalities.

### SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Let us see now, what this constitutional amendment can do toward the solution of the problem. There has been more nonsensical talk on this subject than on almost any other political, economic and social problem of this generation. The Constitutional Convention had some reason to be confused by the proponents of slum clearance in and outside of the Capitol who seemed to think that moral indignation over bad housing, generalizations as to vast improvements in public morale and great savings in other departments of government which would inevitably follow the rehousing of slum dwellers, were a complete substitute for facts, costs, and definite practical plans.

Reformers and politicians to the contrary notwithstanding, the fact is that the Constitutional Convention did not intend that more should be immediately authorized by the legislature than a large scale experiment followed by a return to the people





LOW COST  
HOUSING  
LOCATION PLAN

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. TOMPKINS SQUARE    | 6. McDOUGAL STREET |
| 2. THOS. JEFFERSON PK | 7. NAVY YARD       |
| 3. 145 ST. HARLEM     | 8. BROWNSVILLE     |
| 4. 112 ST. SO. HARLEM | 9. ST. MARY'S PARK |
| 5. DE WITT CLINTON    | 10. SOUTH JAMAICA  |

themselves for further mandates. The approach was not bold and forthright, but guarded and tentative. No carte blanche was offered to the legislature and administrative branches. The Convention said — You are dealing in staggering sums for a purpose which on its face is wholly uneconomical as measured by ordinary bookkeeping. It appears to be socially desirable and politically inevitable. We shall give you enough credit for as much as you can do between now and 1912. If your credit is exhausted then, you will have to ask the people for more. We shall facilitate future popular votes, but that's as far as we shall go now. See to it that your three year experiment is a success, that it is without scandal, confusion or absurdity, or the majority of 1938 may melt away. No less a person than the Saviour assumed that the poor would always be with us, and the poor have always lived in poor dwellings. I devoutly hope no such conclusion will be reached here, but I am constantly reminded that high purpose is often closely linked with feeble execution. The period of evangelism is over and the reformer must now pass on the torch to the administrator.

During the recent campaign there was a further flood of oratory on this subject, consisting mostly of exuberant and irresponsible promises, and competition to see who could bring about the housing millennium fastest. This subject, by now, has passed the stage at which any further gestures and sob stuff are

required. All decent people are united for action. The point is to know what we are driving at and what under the new State Constitution and the law to be passed to make it effective, and with the talent available, can actually be done.

There is an astonishing lack of facts and figures to support the statements of real estate and housing experts and the claims of reformers as to old law tenements. Apparently the two groups do not agree even as to the essentials and of course not as to the remedies.

The late Councilman B. CHARNEY VLADICK, one of the most sincere and enthusiastic housing reformers, had a neat little formula which disposed of the whole problem. The formula ran as follows: there are roughly 4,500,000 people who must be rehoused by means of low rent government subsidies. Figuring that each person required a room and that each room would cost about \$2,000, \$9,000,000,000 would solve the problem. Now, if you have \$1.00 in the form of a subsidy you can borrow \$100.00. If the Federal, State and City governments will each contribute \$1,000,000 a year as a grant, \$100,000,000 can be borrowed by each of these agencies, which gives a total of \$300,000,000 annually. By simply following the same procedure each year for ten years, a total of \$3,000,000,000 has been made available and the problem is solved. This, of course, has all the charm of higher mathematics. One of my professors at college used to say

that qualtrillions are poetry and, by the same token, my friend Mr. VIADICK reached poetic heights with his formula. I am afraid, however, that we shall have to stay much nearer to the ground to accomplish in a decade even a fraction of what the great East Side editor hoped and worked for. The walls of Thebes, we are told, were raised to music, but there was only one impresario conducting and he must have had more harmony in his orchestra than I see about me at the present time.

Actually, there seems to be 62,000 old law tenements including converted dwellings in New York City, of which 6,000 are vacant. They house approximately 2,000,000 people. Of these tenements at least 25,000 housing at least 1,000,000 people, are far below standard. Approaching the problem from another angle there are well over one million persons who cannot at the present time afford to pay more than \$6.00 a month for a room. This brings us to the same conclusion, namely, that no matter how many of these buildings are converted or torn down by the owners or by the City, there will still remain a million people who, under present economic conditions, will achieve decent low-cost housing only by some form of large scale government subsidy. Only a major political prophet can say whether or when the average income of this group will rise to the point at which they can afford to pay more rent and will, therefore, require less government aid.

There is even more divergence of opinion in the field of costs and the public mind has been confused by irreconcilable conclusions, based on totally different premises and therefore not really comparable. The speculative builder works by fairly well recognized bookkeeping principles. At any rate, he has to make money to survive and he cannot do very much funny bookkeeping in the process. The limited dividend people must proceed in part on ordinary business principles but the element of tax exemption, extraordinarily long term loans and other factors introduce complications which make it difficult to arrive at cost figures. When it comes to the field of government subsidized, low-rent housing and slum clearance, we are in a twilight zone where sentiment and altruism have a tendency to elbow out economics and arithmetic. In this zone all sorts of devices are resorted to to show that standards of prudence still prevail and certainly the maximum of business sense should be applied because without it the whole problem is being surrendered to folly, extravagance and bankruptcy.

Let me give you some illustrations: The new Federal housing project in Harlem was not a slum clearance project at all. The buildings were placed on vacant land. The cost per foot is, therefore, not properly to be compared to the cost per foot of the Williamsburg project land, on which there were buildings standing, or to the cost at Red Hook where the area was partly




vacant and valuations were much lower. The standards of construction in Harlem were higher than those which prevail on Park Avenue. I do not mean the apartment lay-outs; I refer to the materials and the manner in which they are incorporated in the buildings. I am aware of the fact that these enormously high and idealistic standards are explained on the ground that the amortization tables are on a 60-year basis instead of the ordinary 50-year basis in speculative building. The facts, however, speak for themselves. While the lay-out is comparatively modest, the appliances and incidental gadgets provided must have run into enormous figures. In the more recent housing developments, Commissioner RUBINSTEIN has brought down these costs to much more reasonable standards and I have no doubt they can be lowered still further. As a matter of fact, they must be brought down because the program will not otherwise survive.

Similarly, in the Williamsburg development in Brooklyn, the tenants are provided with electric cooking and their entire bills for electricity for cooking, lighting and other purposes are in some manner absorbed in a rental which averages about \$6.50 per room per month. We are told that this electricity is cheap because it is bought in very large quantities but the fact is that other people, with higher incomes, whose housing is not subsidized, cannot afford to burn up electricity at will 24 hours a day. It is only a matter of a short time before such extravagances

will become a subject of public ridicule and condemnation. It is my understanding that the Housing Authority under its present chairman is eliminating this feature.

Let me give another illustration: The figures on which the official Federal, State and City housing agencies based their cost per room are not comparable. The State Board of Housing, for example, figures on the basis of construction cost per room, while the federal administrator bases his conclusions on the dwelling unit which, among other things, permits counting alcoves as half rooms. Under the State system all costs, excepting for land, are figured in construction, but the Federal authorities charge to land various items which in ordinary practice would come under construction.

It is the common practice of all government housing agencies to leave out entirely various recreation, street, school, police, fire, utility, and other costs which must be taken care of by the municipality or otherwise independently. In the Red Hook housing development, for example, the City contributed a great deal of land for recreation, and all park and play facilities were provided out of relief funds and are not reflected in the housing costs. The Harlem development included a small area of land for play purposes, which was developed with relief funds, and it was necessary to obtain adjacent property, owned by the City and under the Board of Transportation, in order to piece out the

An aerial photograph of New York City, showing various urban areas. Overlaid on the map are several white, stylized callout boxes with black text. The callouts point to specific areas labeled 'HOUSING' and 'PARK' on the map. The map shows a dense urban landscape with buildings, streets, and green spaces. The callouts are designed to highlight the locations of four major federal low rent housing developments. The text in the callouts describes the construction of these developments and the provision of recreation areas in cooperation with the Park Department.

IN THE FOUR MAJOR  
FEDERAL LOW RENT  
HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS  
BUILT OR UNDER CON-  
STRUCTION, IN NEW  
YORK CITY, AIRVIEWS  
OF WHICH ARE SHOWN  
ON THIS PAGE, RE-  
CREATION AREAS ARE  
PROVIDED

IN COOPERATION  
WITH THE PARK DEPART-  
MENT. IN PREVIOUS PRI-  
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DEVELOPMENTS, RECREATION  
HAS BEEN NEGLECTED

absolutely inadequate play area originally provided. The second play area, which was an integral part of the housing development although it will serve the adjacent neighborhood to some extent, should have been reflected in the housing costs but does not appear there at all. In the case of Williamsburg, the City had to provide an entirely new school at its own expense with a Federal PWA grant. Neither the City's share of the cost of this school nor, so far as I know, the Federal grant were charged to the housing project although both items clearly belong there. In the case of the new Queensbridge development, I obtained from the Governor, with the help of the Mayor, a gift of the old State Barge Canal Terminal which will form the nucleus for the recreation area for the housing development. Not only does the housing program include no bookkeeping item on this subject, and not only must the development be provided out of City and relief funds, but even the bulkhead, or retaining wall, must be paid for by the City. The same logic applies to the dedication by the City of streets to be incorporated in the housing development and to the expenses imposed on other City departments by these developments.

I have already referred to the claim that all the direct and incidental expenses of low-rent, government subsidized housing will be repaid with huge dividends in the future on account of the reduction in crime and juvenile delinquency, accidents, disease, bad health, reduction of fire hazards, etc. I do not in

the least question that the new housing program will bring vast improvements in these fields but I do very seriously doubt that government will cost any less on this account. The fact is that for some time it will cost more and we should at least insist that all costs, direct and indirect, be honestly published and be paid for out of the new housing tax or taxes and not saddled on real estate or buried in false bookkeeping.

Let us be quite honest with ourselves about it. The object here is nothing more nor less than to have the government give the family of low income rooms at the rate of six dollars a month for which the ordinary builder would have to charge from sixteen to eighteen dollars, and the limited dividend company from ten to twelve dollars. The subsidized tenant pays just enough rent for janitor service. He contributes not a nickel toward amortization, interest and taxes. The public pays for these so that the poor in a dislocated economic era may have decent housing. Dress it up in any garments you please, deck it out in fancy phrases, this underlying fact remains unchanged, and we shall gain nothing by veiling it in transparent euphemisms. Still less is accomplished by the charge that the speculative builder and owner are wicked fellows who live on usury. This argument leads straight to Russia, where a benevolent government houses everyone miserably.

Further drastic reductions in cost through mass purchasing and construction and through cooperation of labor are absolutely



essential if this program is to be saved from ultimate failure with the inevitable swing of the pendulum toward conservatism in public financing and expenditures.

### PROGRAM FOR THREE YEARS

On any reasonable assumption it will take many years to solve this entire problem. In the next three years the legislature will probably authorize New York City to borrow a maximum of \$200,000,000 out of the State money made available by the amendment. This would leave \$100,000,000 for the other municipalities. I suggest that this \$200,000,000 be borrowed on the following basis:

1. \$120,000,000 for slum clearance projects to be undertaken by the City directly, and to be serviced by a new tax other than a tax on real estate. To finance the City's share of the program, I propose an additional one cent tax on cigarettes which will yield \$7,200,000 annually. It is assumed that the occupancy tax recently levied is pledged to supplement Federal funds for a new slum clearance development around Corlears Hook, and that therefore unless this occupancy tax is materially raised it will have no effect on the new program.

The proceeds of the additional tax on cigarettes will finance \$100,000,000 of new housing including property taxes and will leave a balance to finance incidental public improvements and certain property taxes on a substantial limited dividend pro-

gram to be described later. The taxes on slum clearance areas would be based on the assessed valuation of the land and buildings at the time of acquisition and would be paid into the General Fund. In this way owners of other real estate would not be required to assume the burden of financing the property taxes on the new developments. It would be inexcusable to saddle on the small home owner any part of the cost of the slum clearance program, and it is inexcusable to offer, in extension of such a course, the plea that the new construction will in some mysterious way make the burdens any lighter. It is true that the amount of slum clearance and limited dividend housing immediately contemplated will have comparatively little effect on the tax rate, but if the whole program is ever carried out the effect will be tremendous, and, in the meantime, the principle of protecting real estate from further burdens should be definitely established and continuously maintained.

2. \$60,000,000 for projects to be undertaken by the City directly, but to be serviced by State grants on the theory that the legislature will give New York City \$2,000,000 of the \$5,000,000 in annual subsidies which under the new constitutional amendment may be pledged in the next three years. A \$2,000,000 annual grant for fifty years will service \$60,000,000 worth of slum clearance.

I have suggested that the City borrow from the State the maximum obtainable at Albany in these three years rather than



issue its own bonds. There is good reason for this. The State's bonds are backed by its full credit, while the City can issue for housing only a superior revenue bond secured in the first instance by a special tax, although in the final analysis this bond is backed by the City's full taxing power. The best information I can obtain from banking circles is that the State, under these conditions, can borrow for 1% less than the City and 1% in interest represents a whole lot of money applied to long term loans. Moreover, because the City is close to the debt limit for other than housing purposes, the market for State bonds is bound to be better than the market for City bonds.

I propose that the City issue its own housing bonds for only one purpose in the course of the next three years, namely, to assist in the financing of certain large scale limited dividend projects largely on present vacant land where rentals can be brought down to a low figure. This suggestion will be treated separately further on.

In the coming three years, with the sums above mentioned, my figures show that the City's slum clearance program will provide for about 120,000 people, including provision for recreation, streets and other incidental public improvements and utilities. It will be seen that this represents only a small fraction of the one million people assumed to require government subsidized, \$6.00 a room housing. If only 12% can be rehoused in

three years, it follows that it will take twenty five years to carry out the entire program. No doubt other factors may materially reduce this schedule, but it is a long and terrifically expensive one on any tenable theory.

At the end of three years, all of the State money made available under the present amendment will have been exhausted. It is true that the City will still have a borrowing capacity for housing, but this will at most only provide a program for the first year of the next administration, that is, in 1945. It follows, therefore, that a large amount of additional credit must be obtained by a further vote of the people before 1944, if the program is to continue at a steady rate. Nothing would be gained at this time by attempting to figure out how much additional money will be needed in the future. At the end of the present City administration it will be necessary to take stock of the situation to see what has been accomplished under the new amendment and what the effect of this accomplishment has been on adjacent private property, speculative building and limited dividend construction.

I have omitted from this statement reference to the Federal housing program, first, because the amount of Federal money to be made available in future is not known, and second, because it seems altogether likely that this Federal money will be used to create low rent housing in outlying sections, rather

than for slum clearance in old, congested sections where the cost of land per foot is very high. This Federal housing will help solve the City's problem and will no doubt draw people away from old-law tenements, but it will not affect what the State and City must do in the next three years.

Personally, I do not share the indignation of some housing experts over what they consider to be the unreasonable attitude of Federal officials in refusing to acquire very expensive land for slum clearance. Certainly there is much to be said for building subsidized group and semi-detached houses in outlying sections with Federal funds, provided that rapid transit facilities are not overtaxed, leaving to the State and City the problem of genuine slum clearance, and to limited dividend companies construction of intermediate cost housing on isolated parcels of vacant land.

## SELECTION OF SLUM CLEARANCE SITES

The selection of sites for actual slum clearance is not as difficult as some people think, although the responsibility is heavy. Since only a comparatively small amount of slum clearance can be accomplished in the remaining life of the present City administration and since it is impractical, if not impossible, to look any further ahead toward definite objectives, the sites

selected must be conspicuously and obviously suitable. They must not only be proper in themselves in that they must include bad, old-law tenements in run down neighborhoods, but they must be properly related to recreation, transportation, streets, schools and other public facilities. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that under present municipal financial conditions, the City of New York cannot contribute a nickel out of ordinary tax funds to the new housing program, and this program financed by a new tax or taxes must provide for all incidental public improvements.

There is a queer notion abroad that the selection of sites should be a great mystery and that only a few insiders of unimpeachable honesty and vast knowledge in the most intimate official and unofficial housing circles should do the picking. Not only is there no sense in this notion, but it is positively dangerous. It is no doubt possible for shrewd and honest public officials to pick up, at prices far below assessed valuations, scattered pieces of real estate or options on them. They may even accomplish this without scandal. When, however, a great municipal program is under discussion involving a number of large plots and many related public improvements, the only sensible procedure is to map these plots, invite full public discussion and acquire them by condemnation where the City does not already own, where it cannot foreclose and where it cannot

buy the awards. You can't buy land to clear slums as though you were shopping for basement bargains. Certainly the charter of the City contemplates action by the Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate, not to speak of other public officials, such as the Board of Education, Police, Fire, Park, Health and Public Works Commissioners and the Borough Presidents, beside the housing officials themselves.

The future of entire neighborhoods is at stake and there cannot be too much public knowledge of what is contemplated and too much airing of plans if general support is to continue, if funds are to be made available for further extensions, if scandals are to be avoided and if general confidence is to be maintained. The object in view, as I understand it, is to rebuild a large part of the community at great expense and under financial conditions justifiable only because of extreme emergency. The public will not long tolerate management of such an enterprise by well-meaning amateurs, no matter how much they have contributed to the education of the public in the past.

The sites which I propose all involve genuine slum clearance. They are selected because they are in the neighborhoods which have the worst housing conditions. Every one of them has a close relation to existing or proposed parks or playgrounds and the

recreation facilities proposed are conservative and considerably below the standards acceptable throughout the country. They constitute an irreducible minimum of facilities required for the new housing which will surround them and for the nearby old housing which will get little at the moment from the housing program except these park and play facilities, wider streets and in some cases more air and light. This may reconcile somewhat the occupants of the adjacent old law tenements to the fact that a preferred class of citizens have been given first rate apartments largely at the public expense.

So far as possible the new housing developments have been grouped around existing parks which are proposed to be expanded or around new play areas in sections conspicuously lacking in them. So far as possible the school question has been considered and also the need for health, fire and police stations. In all cases, marginal streets are proposed to be widened into boulevards and a sufficient number of interior streets are closed to permit of construction of large units. The fact that recreation areas are provided and streets widened has been considered in the coverage of the plots for housing, that is, a somewhat larger density of population and somewhat less court space is needed under these conditions.

In the case of every project the land is divided into a plot marked A and another marked B, and widened streets and play areas are appropriately designated. Plot A in each case represents the area to be built on first, and the theory is that work will commence about May 1st, 1939 and be completed on October 1st, 1940. Plot B represents the second unit of each project to be taken up on the theory that work will commence here on May 1st, 1940 and be completed on October 1st, 1941. It is assumed that all land for both A and B, including streets and play areas, will be acquired at once in April of 1939. This arrangement will permit the City to begin constructing half of the three year program immediately and will allow further time for detailed plans for the second half of the program, for temporarily accommodating a large number of families in the B area, and for other adjustments.

The projects proposed include six in Manhattan where the old-law tenement conditions are worst, two in Brooklyn, one in the Bronx, and one in Queens.

The Manhattan projects consist of the following:

#### TOMPKINS SQUARE

The first project in Manhattan is on the lower East Side, west of the new East River Drive between 7th and 9th Streets from the Drive to Tompkins Square Park, (see page 17) This is part of the completely old blighted East Side tenement district. The new park along the East River at Tompkins Square will provide adequate recreation if an additional playground is established

back of the new public school to be built on 9th Street between Avenue C and Avenue D. The old school in this block is to be abandoned. The cost of the new school should, in my opinion, be part of the cost of the housing development because the school will serve the people in this development. It is proposed that Avenue C and 7th and 9th Streets be considerably widened. This project is within five blocks of the new Hamilton Fish Swimming Pool. The estimated cost of this project is \$16,500,000.

#### THOMAS JEFFERSON PARK

The second Manhattan project consists of an area north and west of Thomas Jefferson Park, an Italian section which includes the most congested tenement blocks in the entire City. (see page 18) The new East River Drive, built by the Triborough Bridge Authority, and Thomas Jefferson Park, as recently reconstructed with relief funds, will take care of part of the recreation for this district. An additional play area is required to the west. It should also be noted that this district has comparatively easy access to Randall's Island which has been converted into a park and will have access by means of a pedestrian bridge to Ward's Island when the State Hospital for the Insane has moved off and when the conversion of this Island into a park is completed. The estimated cost of this project is \$21,400,000.

#### HARLEM, 145th STREET

The third Manhattan project includes the area immediately west of the proposed new playground between 143rd and 145th



Streets and between the East River Drive and Lenox Avenue, (see page 19) This new playground which is included in the maps for the Harlem River Drive has a National Guard Armory on the south and subway yards on the north. The area to the west proposed for the housing development extends almost back to Colonial Park. It is in the heart of Harlem and, with very few exceptions, the buildings are old-law tenements which are terribly overcrowded. The two marginal east and west streets are to be widened and parts of other streets are to be closed to afford the opportunity for large building units. A site for a new school within this area has already been acquired by the City. The estimated cost of land and construction for this plot is \$24,900,000.

#### SOUTH HARLEM, 112th STREET

The fourth Manhattan project is in the so-called Porto Rican neighborhood northeast of Central Park. (see page 20) This is a very congested district and adequate housing is badly needed. The play facilities at the north end of Central Park and in Mt. Morris Park are inadequate and an additional playground is needed in the center of this housing development. The estimated cost of this project is \$11,200,000.

#### DEWITT CLINTON PARK

The fifth project in Manhattan is on the West Side east of DeWitt Clinton Park. (see page 21) From the point of view

of housing and recreation this is probably one of the most neglected sections of the entire City and it is one in which it is enormously difficult to improve living conditions because of the pressure of shipping, industry and business, railroad yards, sidings and storage facilities and the consequent high cost of land. The tenements proposed to be demolished are bad ones. DeWitt Clinton Park is inadequate at the present time and an addition must be provided consisting of the block immediately south of it. The present school on 50th Street, East of 10th Avenue, is totally inadequate and it is necessary to build an entirely new school in this area. The cost of the additional land and construction of this school must be included in the project. The estimated cost of this project is \$20,100,000.

#### MCDONOUGH STREET

The sixth Manhattan project is on the West Side south of Washington Square and beginning on West 3rd Street, a block below the Square. (see page 22) It takes in the very neglected and run down area from West Broadway to 6th Avenue and from West 3rd Street to Bleecker Street, and it includes plots already owned by the City, lying on 6th Avenue, two of which are used temporarily by the Park Department on a permit from the Board of Transportation. A new grade school accommodating 500 pupils will be required and will have to be added to the cost of the project. The estimated cost of this project is \$12,400,000.

## NAVY YARD

The first of the proposed Brooklyn projects consists of clearing a considerable part of the Navy Yard district along the west side of the Yard and City Park, including an addition to City Park consisting of the two blocks immediately east of it. (see page 25) This is one of the worst slum districts in the City. City Park is one of the oldest Brooklyn play areas and is grossly inadequate and neglected. This district is also fairly close to Fort Greene Park and the new residents seeking park as distinguished from play facilities can find accommodation there. A new public school is required for this housing development and the cost of land and construction are included in this project. The estimated cost of this project is \$22,500,000.

## BROWNSVILLE

The second Brooklyn project is located around Betsy Head Park in the Brownsville section. (see page 24) While there are a few fairly good buildings in the area proposed to be taken, the great majority are old law tenements. Betsy Head Park consists of a main area for active recreation including a new swimming pool and bathhouse. There is also a smaller detached area used for play for small children and as a sitting park. Another similar area must be acquired. A new public school is required for this housing development and the cost of land and construction are included in this project. The estimated cost of this project is \$26,500,000.

## ST. MARY'S PARK

The Bronx project is located just south of St. Mary's Park. (see page 25) This park is being reconstructed and will afford sufficient recreation facilities both for the present neighborhood and for the new buildings, provided that additional play space is added adjacent to the new public school between 145th and 146th Streets. This area is badly in need of reconstruction. The estimated cost of this project is \$19,800,000.

## SOUTH JAMAICA

The Queens area is at South Jamaica. (see page 26) This is a colored district and one of the bad new slums, although the detached frame buildings do not look bad from the outside. It is proposed to build the project around the old Jamaica Water Works land, using part of this land for recreation and part for the new housing. Negotiations have been under way for some time for the sale of all of the Jamaica Water Works property to the City. There is no other place in South Jamaica where there is so fine an opportunity for a well rounded slum clearance, recreation and street widening project. A new public school is required for this housing development and the cost of construction is included in this project. The estimated cost of this project is \$19,700,000.

TO SUM UP, the total cost of these ten projects, including land, recreation, school, street widening, protection and other incidental public facilities, is \$195,000,000. These projects can be completed in three years and will take care of 120,000 people.

# TOMPKINS SQUARE

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 670,000 square feet . . . . . \$ 5,200,000.00

Construction 9,000 Rooms . . . . . 9,500,000.00

Cost of Land and Construction . . . . . \$14,700,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS AND SCHOOL AREAS

Cost of Land (150,000 square feet)

and Construction . . . . . 1,800,000.00

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT . . . . . \$16,500,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc









TOMPKINS  
SQUARE

AVE. B

B

7TH ST.

9TH ST.

10TH ST.

AVE. C

E

E

E

NEW  
RECREAT<sup>IN</sup>  
AREA

NEW  
SCHOOL

A

AVE. D

A

EAST RIVER DRIVE

PARK



# THOMAS JEFFERSON PARK COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

## 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 900,000 square feet .....	\$ 6,100,000.00
Construction 15,500 Rooms .....	<u>11,000,000.00</u>
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$20,100,000.00

## 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND STREET WIDENINGS

Cost of Land (100,000 square feet) and Construction .....	<u>1,000,000.00</u>
--	---------------------

3. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT .....	\$21,100,000.00
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### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



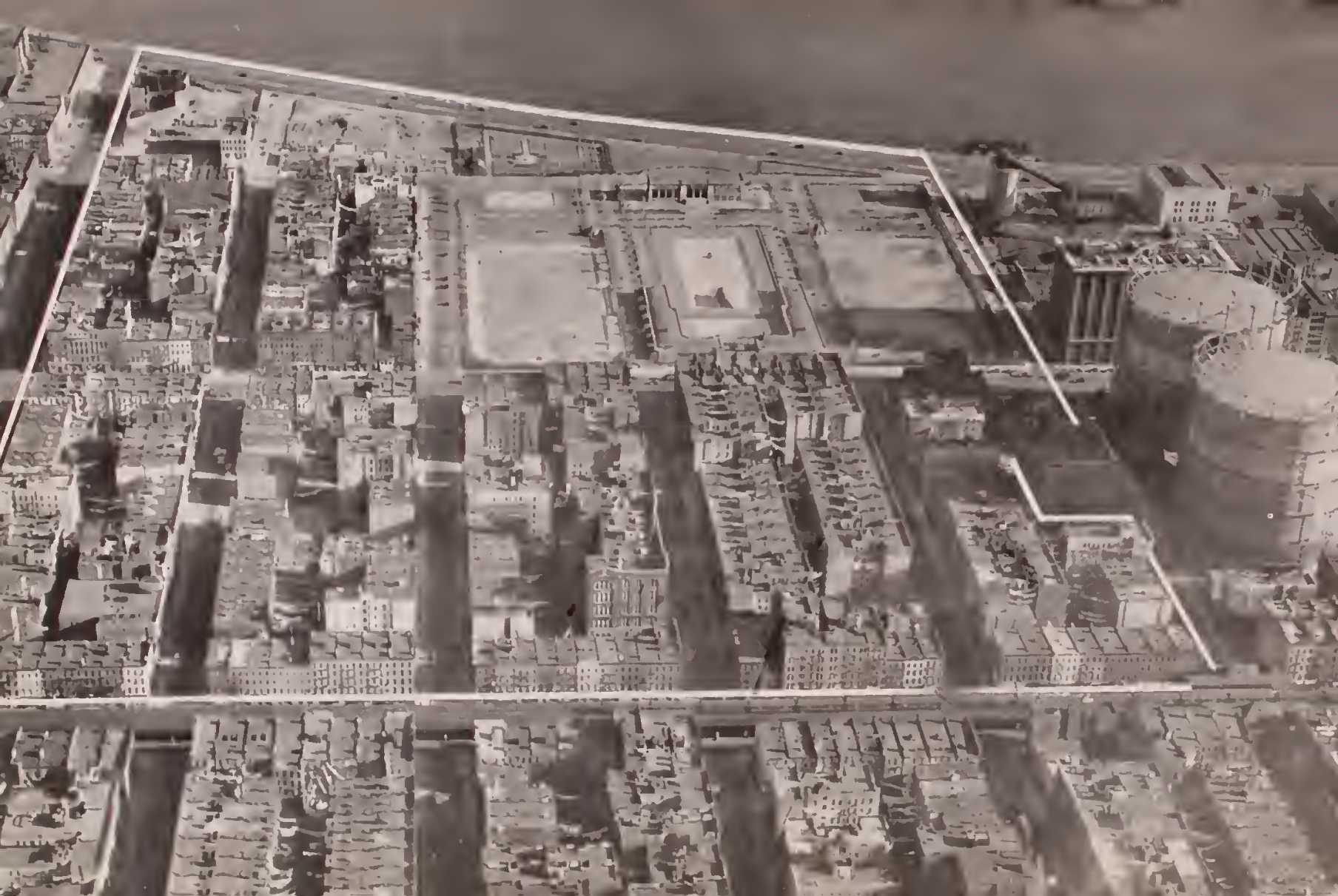
Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Implements etc









HILLMAN RIVER

EAST

RIVER

DRIVE

E. 116TH ST.

E. 114TH ST.

THOMAS  
JEFFERSON  
PARK

FIRST AVE.

NEW  
RECREAT  
AREA

SECOND AVE.

B

B

A



# HARLEM—145th STREET

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 950,000 square feet .....	\$ 9,800,000.00	
Construction 15,800 Rooms .....	<u>14,500,000.00</u>	
Cost of Land and Construction .....		\$24,500,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND STREET WIDENINGS

Cost of Land (60,000 square feet) and Construction .....	<u>600,000.00</u>
---	-------------------

### 3. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT .....

	<u>\$24,900,000.00</u>
--	------------------------

#### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc







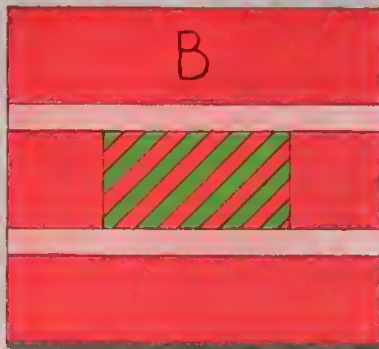
COLONIAL  
PARK

NEW  
RECREATION AREA



COLONIAL  
PARK

EIGHTH AVE.



W 145<sup>TH</sup> ST.

SEVENTH AVE.



W 142<sup>ND</sup> ST.

LENOX AVE.



HARLEM RIVER DRIVE

FIFTH AVE.

RIVER

145<sup>TH</sup> ST.





# SO. HARLEM — 112th STREET COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

## 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 550,000 square feet .....	\$ 4,200,000.00
Construction 5,200 Rooms .....	5,500,000.00
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$ 9,700,000.00

## 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND STREET WIDENINGS

Cost of Land (110,000 square feet) and Construction .....	1,500,000.00
--	--------------

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT .....	\$11,200,000.00
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### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc









# DeWITT CLINTON PARK COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

## 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 680,000 square feet .....	\$ 7,000,000.00
Construction 10,000 Rooms .....	10,500,000.00
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$17,500,000.00

## 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS AND SCHOOL AREAS

Cost of Land (280,000 square feet)	
and Construction .....	2,600,000.00

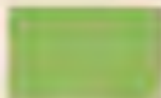
5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT ..... \$20,100,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc





TWELFTH AVE.

NEW  
REC  
AREA

DE WITT  
CLINTON  
PARK

ELEVENTH AVE.

W. 49TH ST.

W. 50TH ST.

B

A

W. 54TH ST.

W. 55TH ST.

TENTH AVE.







# McDOUGAL STREET COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

## 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 580,000 square feet	\$ 4,400,000.00
Construction 5,700 Rooms	6,000,000.00
Cost of Land and Construction	\$10,400,000.00

## 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL AND HEALTH SUB STATION AREAS

Cost of Land (140,000 square feet)	
and Construction	2,000,000.00

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT \$12,400,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Fencements etc





# NAVY YARD

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 1,100,000 square feet . . . . .	\$ 1,500,000.00
Construction 15,000 Rooms . . . . .	15,700,000.00
Cost of Land and Construction . . . . .	\$20,200,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS AND SCHOOL AREAS

Cost of Land (100,000 square feet) and Construction . . . . .	2,500,000.00
--	--------------

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT . . . . . \$22,500,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc









FLUSHING AVE.

CITY PARK

NEW RECREATION AREA

FLUSHING AVE.

CITY PARK

NEW RECREATION AREA

FLUSHING AVE.

CITY PARK

NEW RECREATION AREA

FLUSHING AVE.

CITY PARK

NEW RECREATION AREA

FLATBUSH AVENUE EXTENSION

NASSAU ST.

CONCORD ST.

## THE GREEN PATH



# BROWNSVILLE COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

## 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 1,620,000 square feet .....	\$ 5,500,000.00
Construction 19,000 Rooms .....	<u>20,000,000.00</u>
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$25,500,000.00

## 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL AND HEALTH CENTER AREAS

Cost of Land (200,000 square feet)	
and Construction .....	<u>1,000,000.00</u>

3. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT ..... \$26,500,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc.









# ST. MARY'S PARK

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 910,000 square feet .....	\$ 5,550,000.00
Construction 15,000 rooms .....	<u>13,600,000.00</u>
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$19,150,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND STREET WIDENINGS

Cost of Land (110,000 square feet)	
and Construction .....	<u>650,000.00</u>

3. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT .....	<u>\$19,800,000.00</u>
--------------------------------	------------------------

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc







ST. MARYS PARK

ST.

ST. MARYS ST.

AVE.

ST. ANNS

AVE.

149TH

E 144TH ST.

E 143RD ST.

BROOK

AVE.

E

A

B

WILLIS

AVE.

WESTCHESTER





# SOUTH JAMAICA

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 1,200,000 square feet .....	\$ 1,150,000.00
Construction 16,000 Rooms .....	16,700,000.00
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$18,150,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL, FIRE AND POLICE AREAS

Cost of Land (150,000 square feet)	
and Construction .....	1,550,000.00

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT ..... \$19,700,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



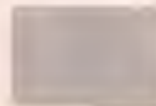
Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc





## LIMITED DIVIDEND PROJECTS

In addition to these government subsidized slum clearance projects, there is a splendid opportunity for several large scale limited dividend developments properly related to other new or projected City improvements. It is proposed that these developments be financed by the large insurance companies which can provide their own capital with three contributions by the City: first, extension of the power of eminent domain, second, provision out of City housing funds for incidental recreation, school, street and other public improvements, and third, tax exemption of the improvements. I believe that these municipal contributions are justified provided that there is a guaranteed rental per room of not exceeding \$10.50 in Manhattan and \$9.00 in other boroughs. These rentals would be \$2.00 below the maximum figures now permitted under the State Housing Law.

The large sites in question are bound to be built up in the near future. It would be a calamity if they were simply subdivided on the ordinary stupid gridiron, speculative, subdivision basis with inadequate plots, streets and play facilities without any reference to education, police, utility and other needs and with no single architectural plan. Moreover, intelligent large scale planning of these areas to reach the income group just above those who are able to pay only \$6.00 will help to dispose

of part of the old law tenement problem. The City has a tremendous stake in the immediate and proper disposition of these few remaining large areas within its borders.

The total estimated cost of the projects listed below is \$90,000,000. I assume that about half of the construction can be done in the next three years, that is, a total of \$45,000,000. Of this amount, about \$5,000,000 must be contributed by the City out of its own housing funds to pay for land and improvements, for recreation, streets, school, fire, police and other needed public facilities. The rest would have to be provided by the insurance companies. I have assumed an interest rate of 4%, although I have no doubt that the companies will demand more. It seems to me that these great regulated semi public corporations with large amounts of money to invest ought to be anxious to co-operate on the housing program and to reimburse their hold on public confidence in this way. It seems also that these companies should change their attitude toward the terms for which housing loans are made so as to extend these loans over a greater period, say of fifty years, provided that proper building standards are adopted and that repairs and replacements are guaranteed. I assume also that by statute and contract definite assurance will be given that tax exemption of improvements will actually be extended over the period agreed upon and that no subsequent City administration will repudiate this obligation.







## AQUEDUCT

The first of the proposed limited dividend projects in Queens consists of the Aqueduct Race Track north of the Sunrise Highway at Aqueduct. (see page 34) The Sunrise Highway is being converted into a parkway as part of the circumferential system. The race track consists of about 160 acres and would afford a magnificent opportunity for a demonstration of what can be done within the City on a large scale, low-rental, group and semi-detached housing plan. All the necessary park, street, school and other facilities must be provided, but these would be paid for by the City as distinguished from the limited dividend corporation. A new public school is required for this housing development and the cost of land and construction are included in this project. The total estimated cost of this project is \$17,500,000.

## ROCKAWAY BEACH

The second limited dividend Queens project is at Rockaway Beach back of the new Rockaway improvement financed by the New York City Parkway Authority. (see page 35) A mile and a half of buildings to a depth of 200 feet back of the boardwalk have been razed as part of this improvement. Recreation facilities and a parkway will be built on this land. Immediately north of this strip of new park land there is an immense blighted area. This area lies between Rockaway Beach Boulevard and the city park. A section has been zoned for business, so as to limit the so-called amusement area. East of this amusement area, from 75rd to 94th Street, there is a splendid opportunity for limited dividend housing so constructed as to take advantage

of the ocean air and view, and to permit additions to the number of tenants in the summer time. The present north and south streets would be eliminated in favor of a smaller number of wide streets, and Rockaway Boulevard, which is at present very narrow and congested, would be widened to 100 feet from 75rd to 110th Street. The land has a comparatively low value at the present time. The great Rockaway improvement should be flanked by the right kind of residence, and only enterprise backed by large funds can accomplish this. This property can be approached not only by buses over the two new causeways but it is inevitable that the Rockaway branch of the Long Island Railroad will be acquired before long by the City of New York for rapid transit purposes, and in the meantime the State grade crossing elimination program will provide a new elevated structure in the Rockaways deliberately designed for ultimate use for City rapid transit purposes. A new public school is required for this housing development and the cost of land and construction are included in this project. The estimated cost of this project is \$35,000,000.

TO SUMMARIZE, five limited dividend projects are proposed, running into a total cost of \$90,000,000. It is assumed that about half of these areas would actually be built on within the next three years and that in this period at least \$5,000,000 would have to be furnished by the City for recreation, school, street and other improvements to be financed out of City housing funds. There would be enough margin out of the proceeds of the one cent cigarette tax over and above the needs for servicing slum clearance projects to take care of this item, and also to pay annually into the General Fund the equivalent of remitted taxes on improvements.

LIMITED  
DIVIDEND  
CORPORATION

## HOUSING ■ LOCATION PLAN

1. EAST RIVER DRIVE AT 96<sup>TH</sup> STREET
2. SOUNDVIEW PARK
3. FLATBUSH
4. AQUEDUCT
5. ROCKAWAY BEACH

# EAST RIVER DRIVE—96th STREET

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 550,000 square feet . . . . .	\$ 5,000,000.00
Construction 8,000 Rooms . . . . .	9,000,000.00
Cost of Land and Construction . . . . .	\$12,000,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND STREET WIDENINGS

Cost of Land (50,000 square feet) and Construction . . . . .	500,000.00
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5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT . . . . . \$12,500,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



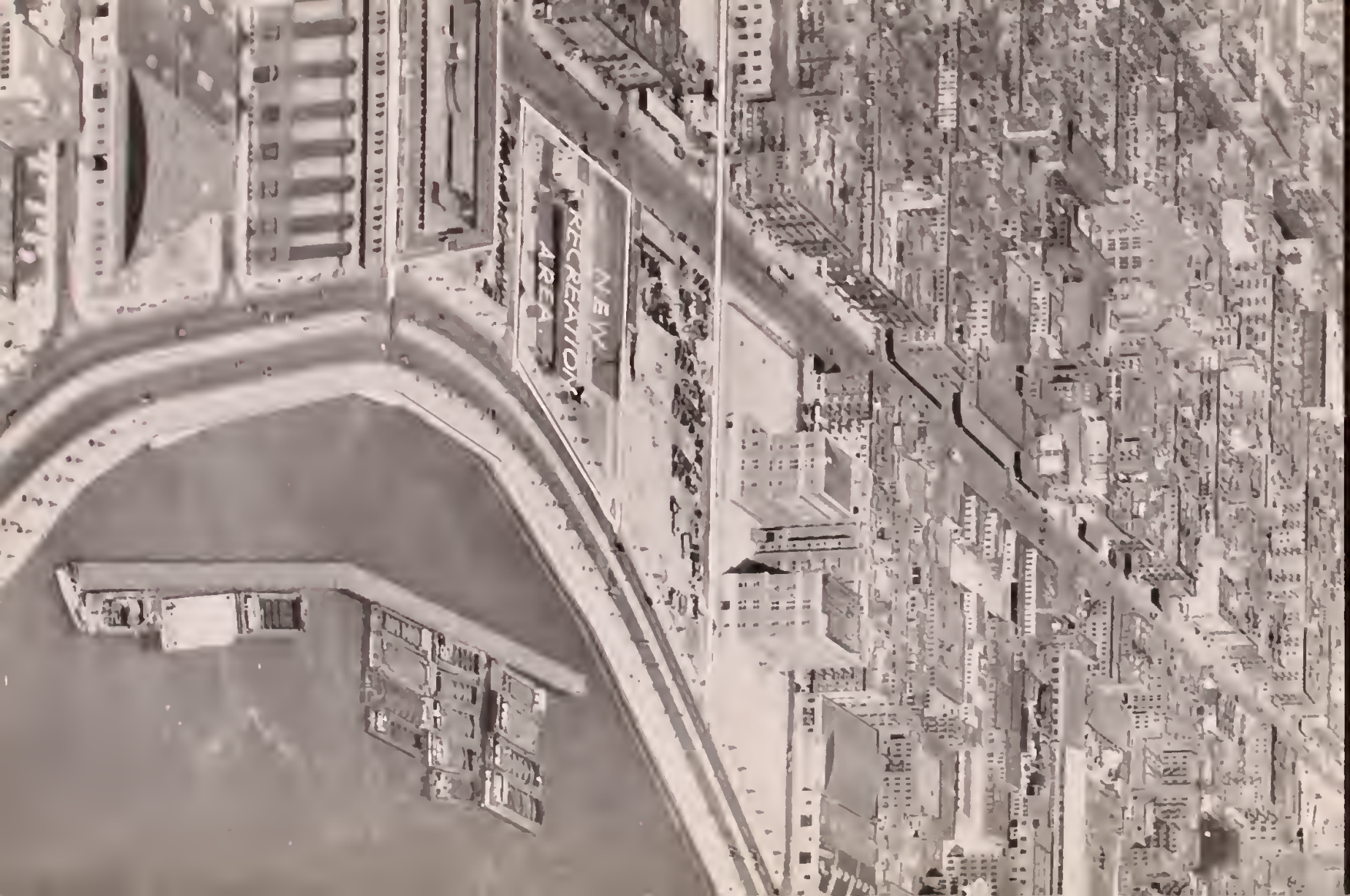
Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc.









# SOUND VIEW PARK

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 1,500,000 square feet .....	\$ 700,000.00	
Construction 10,000 Rooms .....	<u>11,000,000.00</u>	
Cost of Land and Construction .....		\$11,700,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL, FIRE AND POLICE AREAS

Cost of Land (200,000 square feet)		
and Construction .....	<u>1,000,000.00</u>	

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT ..... \$12,700,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc











# FLATBUSH—BROOKLYN

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 1,500,000 square feet .....	\$ 1,500,000.00
Construction 10,000 Rooms .....	<u>11,000,000.00</u>
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$12,500,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL AND HEALTH CENTER AREAS

Cost of Land (700,000 square feet)	
and Construction .....	<u>2,000,000.00</u>

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT ..... \$14,500,000.00

#### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Tenements etc







AVE.

FARMACUT

RD.



ST.

PROPOSED

ST.

AVE.

AVE.

AVE.

FOSTER

AVE.

ST.

ST.

E 37TH

BROOKLYN

NEW  
REC.  
AREA

do

NEW  
SCHOOL  
AREA

NEW YORK

ROOSTRAND

NEWKIRK

RD.







# AQUEDUCT—QUEENS

## COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 3,500,000 square feet .....	\$ 1,000,000.00
Construction 12,000 Rooms .....	<u>15,000,000.00</u>
Cost of Land and Construction .....	\$11,000,000.00

### 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL, FIRE AND POLICE AND HEALTH SUB-STATION AREAS

Cost of Land (3,500,000 square feet) and Construction .....	<u>5,500,000.00</u>
--	---------------------

5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT ..... \$17,500,000.00

### COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites

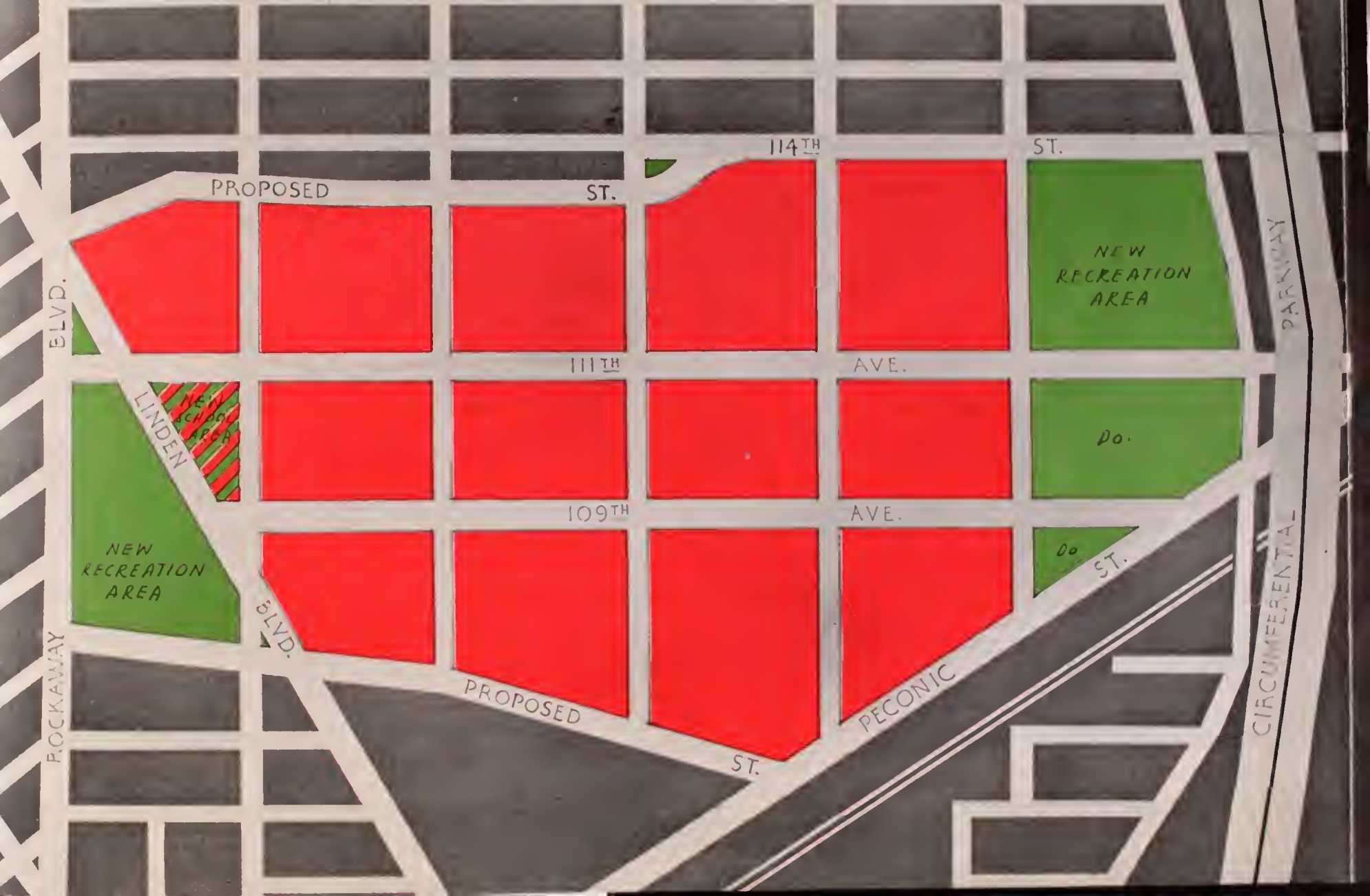


Existing  
Tenements etc









PROPOSED

ST.

114TH

ST.

NEW  
RECREATION  
AREA

111TH

AVE.

Do.

109TH

AVE.

Do.

ST.

PROPOSED

ST.

PECONIC

CIRCUMFERENTIAL  
PARKWAY

BLVD.

ROCKAWAY

LINDEN

NEW  
RECREATION  
AREA

BLVD.









# COLOR CHART

Housing



Parks or  
Recreation Areas



Schools or  
School Sites



Existing  
Foundations etc.



## 1. HOUSING AREA

Land 2,500,000 square feet \$ 7,400,000.00

Construction 20,000 Rooms 22,600,000.00

Cost of Land and Construction 30,000,000.00

## 2. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, STREET WIDENINGS, SCHOOL, FIRE AND HEALTH SUB-STATION AREAS

Cost of Land (500,000 square feet)  
and Construction

5,200,000.00

## 5. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT

35,200,000.00

## ROCKAWAY BEACH COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION









## REHABILITATION AND DEMOLITION OF OLD-LAW TENEMENTS

I have recommended no loans to owners for rehabilitation of old-law tenements. I think it regrettable that the Constitutional Amendment, as adopted, was not broad enough for a real rehabilitation program. This would have required not only government loans at low interest but also government subsidies and I believe a tremendous amount might have been accomplished in some neighborhoods by tearing down every third tenement house so as to provide light and air on one side of every remaining building. I am fully aware of the fact that such a program is distasteful to many reformers who assert that these old buildings are not worth saving and reconstructing, that the final result of such expenditures would be a feeble compromise with principle and that the public would not tolerate large subsidies to private individuals.

It can still be demonstrated that more of the whole problem could have been solved in this way at smaller cost than by attempting to tear down all sub-standard dwellings and build entirely new ones in their place, there is no use laboring this point now. No reliable figures of any kind are available indicating

how much money would be borrowed for this purpose without a government grant, bearing in mind that existing equities must be wiped out and mortgages subordinated with the consent of those involved before the owner could borrow from the City and give adequate security. It is hardly necessary to add that the local law establishing a revolving fund to enable the City to step in itself to make improvements at the owner's expense is entirely unworkable.

There are, however, other means of getting rid of sub standard old law tenements. One of them is vigorously to enforce the laws regarding violations. It is silly to continue making gestures in this direction while permitting owners flagrantly to disregard regulations. No doubt considerable hardship would follow a wholesale clamping down on all buildings with any violations, but a program of strict enforcement, where serious violations are concerned, would certainly be supported by the public. Dangerous and unfit buildings should be torn down.

Another most important step in the solution of the old law tenement problem would be the adoption of an arbitrary and fixed rule by the City, fully supported by statute, providing for automatic foreclosure in the case of all properties when accumulated back taxes, assessments and penalties reach a figure of

50% of the assessed valuation. At the present time the City goes through the extraordinary farce of condemning property for public use which is already wholly or largely eaten up by taxes. Certainly the City should get rid of tenements in which owners and mortgagees no longer have any substantial interest, which they cannot afford to keep up and which are bound to become a menace because of neglect.

## EFFECT OF HOUSING CONSTRUCTION ON LABOR AND RELIEF

Among the incidental benefits of the Constitutional Amendment cited by housing enthusiasts is the immediate effect of a great construction program on labor and relief. This will not, however, happen automatically, and it will not happen at all unless the full cooperation of labor is pledged and the pledge is kept. Construction costs will rise to impossible figures and all calculations and estimates will become valueless if organized labor sees in such a program an opportunity to enforce exorbitant demands because the public is paying the bill. Not only will the program collapse of its own weight, but the effect on private construction will be disastrous. Similarly, if the program is tied up by wage, hour, jurisdictional and other labor disputes,

there will be repercussions which will be heard around the entire country and which will bring no comfort either to labor or to the proponents of decent housing. Those who point with envy to the accomplishments in the field of low cost housing in England should keep in mind that labor costs are about two and one-half times as high in New York as in London. Conditions no doubt are not similar, but the fact remains that labor must make its contribution in New York if costs are to be kept within reasonable and acceptable bounds.

An early conference should be held with labor leaders to reach an agreement on just what labor costs will be. Personally, I strongly favor an annual wage for all skilled trades with a guarantee of employment for three years. A similar conference should be held with the manufacturers of all building materials. It must be brought home to both of these groups that without a complete understanding with them in advance the entire program will collapse.

As to the effect on relief, I believe that it would be a sound policy to require that contractors on both slum clearance and limited dividend projects take a certain percentage of skilled and unskilled men from the relief rolls, let us say 50%. Most of the skilled men on relief are members of unions and no diffi-

culty should be interposed by the unions. Certainly if the City of New York is to impose additional taxes to finance housing, a substantial reduction in work relief forces should be insisted upon. The benefit to men on relief who want regular jobs under normal working conditions can hardly be overstated. It should be possible for the City authorities to work out a perfectly definite schedule with the Works Progress Administrator for New York City under which the housing program, as it develops, would absorb a certain number of his men.

## ADMINISTRATION

How shall housing be administered by the State and City under the new Constitutional Amendment? This is a matter of paramount importance because no amendment is self-executed.

Since the State will itself loan money and grant subsidies, since it is the fountain head of law, and since the program is recognized as one of state-wide concern, it must be assumed that there will be some kind of a new agency at Albany representing the Governor and the Legislature. What shall it be? I believe that in place of the present State Housing Board there should be a board with the functions normally discharged by a

bank or banker in private financing. This board should consist of State officials, *ex officio*, including the State Superintendent of Insurance because of his supervision of corporations with large funds which may be loaned for low cost housing and because he has been Chairman of the present Housing Board and knows the problem, the Commissioner of Architecture because he knows building plans, and the Commissioner of Taxation and Finance. This group would pass upon all requests for loans and grants and would keep an eye on the work done by the municipalities with State funds. This new board would not, however, have anything to do directly with construction and its present function of sponsoring limited dividend projects would be turned over to the municipalities.

Coming now to municipal organization, my recommendation is confined to New York City. The present City Housing Authority should be abolished and in its place there should be a board which would include heads of the most vitally affected departments, *ex officio*, and representatives of the public. I suggest that the Commissioner of Housing and Buildings be Chairman and that the Chairman of the City Planning Commission, the Commissioner of Parks and the Commissioner of Public

Works be ex officio members and that there be three other members appointed by the Mayor for overlapping terms of six years each.

The selection of tenants in slum clearance and limited dividend projects should be left to the City Welfare Commissioner, so as to avoid building up a new bureaucracy in the Housing Authority. After all, the Welfare Department is in constant touch with similar and overlapping problems.

I confess to some uneasiness over government operation and selection of tenants. Present rules for admission to subsidized housing may be as strict as those applied to civil service. The gate of entry may be as straight as that which leads into heaven itself. The housing chief of today may be as incorruptible as the Angel Gabriel. Tomorrow the story may be different, and God help this City if Fusion goes out and Tammany comes back, because government controlled housing with wide discretion as to sites, construction, operation and tenants may become a reservoir of honest graft and patronage beyond the fondest hopes of

half starved district leaders. The system must be carefully and soundly established by its sponsors, because it is quite in the cards that the next municipal campaign may be decided on a housing issue with conservative and critical citizens holding the balance of power.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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If this paper has the effect of clarifying the atmosphere and sharply outlining the issues, it will have accomplished its purpose.

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